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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday - April 9, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "INTO THE FRYING PAN." Information from the Farm Security Administration.  
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Raising chickens is no get-rich-quick, easy scheme. It's hard work and serious business! But lots of rural people think it's worth the trouble -- especially if they're trying to economize and produce most of their living on the farm. Some of these thrifty folks are borrowers of the Farm Security Administration, and today we hear from them on the care of young chickens. Chickens are a pretty dependable source of income, you know, as well as a saving in the family budget. This year's Spring chickens mean a lot of this year's Fall clothing and winter necessities. And unlike gardens and field crops, chickens don't depend on rainfall.

A good start for chickens usually means an early start. Chicks should be hatched early enough that they get a good growth before hot summer months and mature early enough for fall egg production. Some people like to plan for County Fair, or State Fair, competition too.

Well, let's assume you have a brand new flock of baby chicks. They have just some from the hatchery, or home incubator, or off the nests. First you want to put them in a clean, comfortable brooder house. In the house you spread some clean burlap or gunny sacks over the litter.... to keep the "innocent babies" from eating litter instead of food before they learn the difference. To keep them from crowding into corners at night, round out the corners with building paper, pieces of tin or wood, or little wire-covered frames set diagonally across the corners. A lantern burning dimly in the room will help too.

Plan now not to let young chicks run and feed with older ones. Keep each



bunch of chicks separate until they are at least two months old. Big chickens crowd little ones away from feed and water, and even kill and injure them.... What you feed young chicks is important. Sour milk is good for them if you have it to spare. And, of course, all chickens should have plenty of green feed. Green feed is necessary because it contains certain vitamins that chickens - like people - need. Without these vitamins, chickens lose their vitality, become thin and stunted in growth, seem tired and lazy, often develop a watery discharge from the eyes and nose, lose their resistance to disease, and probably develop roup or rickets or something else. If you are in doubt about what are good feeds, talk to your farm or home supervisor, or county agent.

It is well to put mash and grain in troughs or hoppers instead of scattering it loose on the ground. Feeders should be on little stands too, so the chicks won't get their feet into them or scratch litter through the feed. They should be big enough to allow an inch or more of feeding space for each chick for the first three weeks, and double that space afterward.

Sometimes people use newspapers, pieces of cardboard, egg-case flats, or paper plates to feed baby chicks on - then remove and burn them after each "meal." Had you ever thought about making most of your poultry equipment? A lot of people do - make everything from feeders and waterers to runways and brooder houses. If you are inexperienced, you might begin with a little feed scoop - it's simple and easy to make and convenient to use. Just take a half-gallon, rectangular oil can like you get at filling stations, slice through it diagonally lengthwise with a pair of tin shears, and hammer down the rough edges.

Always keep plenty of fresh clean water before chickens. Don't let them drink from stagnant pools or ditches. A convenient watering fountain for small chicks can be made from a gallon pail, or syrup bucket, and a pie tin. Punch six or eight holes in the sides of the bucket a little below the upper edge. Then fill





the bucket with water, turn the pie tin over the top, hold it firmly in place and invert it. Be sure the holes aren't too far from the top of the pail or they will come above the edge of the pie tin and make it run over and waste the water. Glass fruit jars also make good fountains, if you have special lids for them. Keep a drip pan whenever necessary under water fountains so chickens won't walk around on wet ground and take cold. Keep chicken-size granite grit or clean river sand and gravel in a gravel hopper for chickens. Some people use oyster shell if it is cheap and easy to get.

Whatever you do, keep chicken quarters and equipment clean. Cleanliness is the best means of preventing disease and parasites. Brooder houses should be scraped, scrubbed, and disinfected before new chicks are put in them, and cleaned regularly thereafter. To get rid of mites - in cracks and crevices of roosts, walls, floors, and sills - first clean and then paint or spray. You can use a commercial solution for this, or take three parts of "burnt-out" motor oil drained from a crank case, and mix it with one part kerosene.

Besides cleaning and disinfecting to prevent or get rid of disease germs and parasites, you can follow some other precautions. See that the poultry house is not overcrowded, that it is well-ventilated, is free from drafts and dampness, and arranged so it can be cleaned easily, sunned, aired, and disinfected. Be sure chickens don't drink dirty water, eat moldy or infected feed, or run on infected ground.

Burn all dead chickens or bury them several feet in the ground. Keep pigeons and sparrows and other birds away from chickens as much as possible, not only to prevent their eating up feed but prevent their scattering disease germs or mites and lice. Get rid of chickens that are thin, crippled, deformed, weak, or sickly - they aren't worth their keep!!

Also, resolve this year to keep some poultry records. See for yourself how much chickens save and earn, and how little they cost to raise. If you have any questions or problems, your county agent, or representative of the Farm Security Administration will be glad to help you.

